[illegible] ([illegible]) [illegible]

22> [illegible]

Characteristics of a saintly devotee

22> Compassion

A devotee must be compassionate

—[illegible]

—Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Śrīmad Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

[illegible]

The longing to dispel the suffering of others is known as *karuṇā*—divine compassion. One whose heart is adorned with this sacred virtue is truly compassionate. Among the twenty-six transcendental qualities of a Vaiṣṇava, *karuṇā* radiates as an effulgent gem. Though fragments of compassion may be perceived elsewhere, its perfect and eternal illumination is unattainable beyond the sphere of pure Vaiṣṇavas. In the hearts of saintly devotees, this virtue exists eternally, resplendent in its fullness.

[illegible]

The *sajjana*—the true saintly souls—dwell in the boundless ocean of eternal bliss; sorrow cannot touch them. It is the *asajjana*—those who have turned away from Bhagavān—who are ensnared in the endless cycle of suffering. Beholding their anguish, the heart of the *sajjana* is flooded with deep, unceasing compassion. The *asajjana*, restless and bereft of peace, wander ceaselessly through the realms of heaven and earth (*martya-loka*, planet of death), seeking solace yet finding none. It is only the Vaiṣṇavas—the bearers of divine grace—who hold the power to dispel their sorrow and bestow upon them the light of eternal joy.

[illegible]

Asajjana and the Illusion of False Pursuits

The term *asajjana* refers to two kinds of misguided souls—followers of māyāvāda school (*māyāvādīs)* who are absorbed in the impersonal contemplation of the undifferentiated Brahman (*nirbheda-brahmānusandhāna*) and fruitive workers (*karmīs*) who are intoxicated by mundane pleasures, lost in the inertia of materialistic thought.

[illegible]

These two—*māyāvādīs*, who deny the Lord's personal form, and *karmīs*, who are ensnared in fleeting sensual indulgences—remain engrossed in impermanent endeavors. Hence, they cannot be considered *nitya* (eternal) or *satya* (truthful), for they chase shadows rather than reality. It is a grave misconception to believe that mere removal of the veils of *karma* and *jñāna* will automatically awaken devotion to Viṣṇu.

[illegible]

Those who harbor ulterior motives or don the guise of devotees merely for recognition—such deceptive or hypocritical devotees—yearn to be called Vaiṣṇavas, yet they fail to realize the supreme rarity of the Vaiṣṇava designation. The root cause of all suffering is estrangement from *viṣṇu-bhakti* (or averseness to *viṣṇu-bhakti*). Due to this very alienation, the *jīva* falls into the bondage of *māyā* and sinks into the vast ocean of sorrow.

[illegible]

In his desperate struggle to escape suffering, the conditioned soul takes refuge, at times, in fruitive rituals (*sakāma-karma*), at times in impersonal knowledge (*abheda-jñāna*), and at times in reckless self-indulgence (*svecchācāra*). Yet none of these can lead him to eternal bliss.

[illegible]

Only when he is utterly helpless, surrounded by despair on all sides, and surrenders at the feet of the Vaiṣṇava-*sajjana* (saintly devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa) does true compassion descend upon him. The Vaiṣṇavas, moved by boundless *karuṇā*, grace him with the gift of divine deliverance.

[illegible]

By immersing him in the nectarean narrations of Bhagavān's name, form, qualities, and pastimes, they sever his bondage to *māyā* and establish him in the eternal ecstasy of unalloyed devotional service (*bhagavat-sevā*). In all the worlds, there exists no compassion greater than this.

[illegible]

Transcending the Fourfold Bondage

The longing for *artha* (wealth), *dharma* (virtue), *kāma* (desire), and *mokṣa* (liberation)—this fourfold pursuit is the very root of suffering. As long as the soul remains ensnared in the illusion of bodily identity (*dehātma-buddhi*), as long as the subtle ego of the material mind is not dissolved, these fleeting goals continue to be its highest aspiration. But by the boundless grace of saintly souls, one comes to perceive their hollowness. And by the same divine mercy, one becomes detached from them and is established in the eternal service of Viṣṇu. This alone is the sole path to liberation from the afflictions of this transient world.

[illegible]

The Vaiṣṇavas are ever engaged in the sacred mission of rescuing suffering souls from the torments of *saṁsāra* (material existence) and consecrating them in the joyous devotional service of Bhagavān.

[illegible]

This is the very essence of their *karuṇā*—the truest expression of divine compassion. To immerse the soul in the loving service of Hari is the supreme fulfillment of compassion in its most exalted form.